Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1, 2-4, and 7-11 have been amended. Claims 15, 18, 21, 44, 59, 70, and 77 have been cancelled without prejudice to their subsequent reintroduction into this application or their introduction into a related application. New claim 79 has been added. The following list of claims replaces all prior versions and lists of claims in the application.

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) A cartridge for determining the presence or amount of a microbial contaminant in a sample, the cartridge comprising:

(i) a housing defining a fluid inlet port, an optical cell, and a conduit having a fluid contacting surface for providing fluid flow communication between the fluid inlet port and the optical cell, wherein the optical cell is located downstream of the conduit; and

(ii) hemocyte lysate ~~disposed~~ dried on a region of the fluid contacting surface of the conduit, so that when a sample is applied to the fluid inlet port, the sample traverses the region and solubilizes the hemocyte lysate during transport to the optical cell.

2. (Currently Amended) The cartridge of claim 1, further comprising a chromogenic substrate disposed on a second, different region of the fluid contacting surface.

3. (Currently Amended) The cartridge of claim 2 or 79, wherein the second region is located downstream of the first region.

4. (Currently Amended) The cartridge of claim 1 or 79, further comprising a preselected amount of an agent representative of the microbial contaminant disposed on the fluid contacting surface of the conduit.

5. (Original) The cartridge of claim 4, wherein the agent is disposed on the first region.

6. (Original) The cartridge of claim 4, wherein the agent is a bacterial endotoxin or a (1→3)-β-D glucan.

7. (Currently Amended) A cartridge for determining the presence or amount of a microbial contaminant in a sample, the cartridge comprising:

(i) a housing defining

a first fluid inlet port, a first optical cell, and a first conduit having a fluid contacting surface for providing fluid flow communication between the first fluid inlet port and the first optical cell, and

a second fluid inlet port, a second optical cell, and a second conduit having a fluid contacting surface for providing fluid flow communication between the second fluid inlet port and the second optical cell;

(ii) a first hemocyte lysate ~~disposed~~ dried on a first region of the fluid contacting surface of the first conduit, so that when a sample is applied to the first fluid inlet port, the sample traverses the region and solubilizes the first hemocyte lysate during transport to the first optical cell; and

(iii) a second hemocyte lysate ~~disposed~~ dried on a first region of the fluid contacting surface of the second conduit, so that when sample is applied to the second fluid inlet port, the sample traverses the region and solubilizes the second hemocyte lysate during transport to the second optical cell.

8. (Currently Amended) The cartridge of claim 7, further comprising a chromogenic substrate disposed on a second, different region of the fluid contacting surface of the first conduit.

9. (Currently Amended) The cartridge of claim 8, wherein the second region is located downstream of the first region.

10. (Currently Amended) The cartridge of claim 8, further comprising a chromogenic substrate disposed on a second, different region of the fluid contacting surface of the second conduit.

11. (Currently Amended) The cartridge of claim 10, wherein the second region is located downstream of the first region.

12. (Original) The cartridge of claim 7, further comprising a preselected amount of an agent representative of a microbial contaminant disposed on the fluid contacting surface of the first conduit.

13. (Original) The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the agent is disposed on the first region.

14. (Original) The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the agent is a bacterial endotoxin or a (1→3)-β-D glucan.

15-78. (Cancelled).

79. (New) A cartridge for determining the presence or amount of a microbial contaminant in a sample, the cartridge comprising:

(i) a housing defining a fluid inlet port, an optical cell, and a conduit having a fluid contacting surface for providing fluid flow communication between the fluid inlet port and the optical cell;

(ii) a hemocyte lysate disposed on a first region of the fluid contacting surface of the conduit; and

(iii) a chromogenic substrate disposed on a second, different region of the fluid contacting surface of the conduit,

wherein, when a sample is applied to the fluid inlet port, the sample traverses the first and second regions and solubilizes the hemocyte lysate and chromogenic substrate during transport to the optical cell.